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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2053
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1887
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 5999
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2311
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 6316
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 8711
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 9983
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 6921
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 6907
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 3256
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000514

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SUBJECT: PRC STATE COUNCILOR TANG'S JAPAN VISIT: TAIWAN AND
FOOD SAFETY FRICTIONS

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph R. Donovan for reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan discussed Taiwan, improving food safety, the dispute over the East China Sea, North Korea, Burma, and environmental cooperation with his Japanese interlocutors during his February 21-23 visit to Japan. Both Japan and China are seeking to prevent public concern over food safety -- following the food poisoning cases caused by frozen dumplings imported from China -- from casting a shadow over Chinese President Hu Jintao's upcoming April visit to Japan. Tang met with Prime Minister Fukuda, Foreign Minister Komura, Diet members, and business officials to lay the groundwork for Hu's visit. He also visited Nara and Osaka during what was billed as his last official trip to Japan before retiring in March. End Summary.

Taiwan

¶2. (C) Tang told Komura that Japan's position on Taiwan is the "top issue" that could threaten progress on improving bilateral ties, Endo stated. Tang spoke "for a long time" on Taiwan and urged Japan to strongly oppose the UN referendum in a more "clear-cut and strong" way. Komura replied that Japan's stance on Taiwan has remained stable since normalization, and noted that Japan remains opposed to unilateral action to change the status quo.

Dumpling Food Poisoning

¶3. (C) According to MOFA China Division Deputy Director Kazuhiko Endo, Tang told Foreign Minister Komura and Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda on February 21 that Japan and China

should set up a "mechanism" to monitor food safety and expressed sympathy for the victims who had been poisoned by frozen PRC-made dumplings that had been contaminated with pesticide. He refrained from apologizing, however, and stated that both sides need to make an effort to improve food safety and said it is "too early to tell" where the food contamination/poisoning occurred, and asserted that further investigation is needed.

14. (C) Endo added that public concern over PRC food safety could impede efforts to improve relations with Beijing and could hamper the atmosphere for President Hu Jintao's visit in April. This contrasts with MOFA comments on February 18 suggesting the food safety issue would not hinder bilateral ties. Japan National Police Agency officials visited Beijing on February 25 and were going to raise food safety, but their visit was pre-planned and was not in response to the contamination. In the end, it worked out very well for the Japanese side since NPA decided to send their number-two ranking official following the contamination.

No Progress on East China Sea

15. (C) Prime Minister Fukuda and Foreign Minister Komura told Tang that it is important to resolve the long-standing dispute over gas exploration in the East China Sea, Endo continued. Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka also raised this with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing during the eighth round of strategic dialogue talks in Beijing on February 22 and 23. Tang agreed it was important for both sides to work toward a mutually acceptable solution. Endo predicted, however, that "there is still along way to go" before a resolution will be reached.

16. (C) Foreign Minister Komura told Tang it is important to continue to push for denuclearization in North Korea by

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making continued progress via the six-party talks process. He called on China to provide written support for Japan's UNSC bid, and said it is important for Burma to make progress toward democratization. Tang and Komura also agreed to continue efforts to promote environmental cooperation.

17. (C) Tang told Komura that Japan's position on Taiwan is the "top issue" that could threaten progress on improving bilateral ties, Endo stated. Tang spoke "for a long time" on Taiwan and urged Japan to strongly oppose the UN referendum in a more "clear-cut and strong" way. Komura replied that Japan's stance on Taiwan has remained stable since normalization, and noted that Japan remains opposed to unilateral action to change the status quo.

Tang Bids Farewell to Japanese Diet Members

18. (C) As in previous visits, Tang who speaks fluent Japanese and is the "dean" of the PRC Japan hands, met with the heads of Democratic Party of Japan, New Komeito, Social Democratic Party, and Japan Communist Party. He also attended a breakfast with business leaders to promote economic ties and ended his visit with a trip to Nara and Osaka. MOFA officials said that despite cloud cast on the visit from increased public attention on food safety, Tang's visit to Japan was successful, and described the overall tone of the visit as "happy."
SCHIEFFER